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Dr. Dre's Up In Smoke Tour Comes Under Fire

It's unclear how the attempts in Michigan to ban tour videos will affect outing including Eminem, Snoop Dogg.

By archive-Jahna-Berry

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After the Up in Smoke tour came under fire last week from two Michigan cities that tried to prevent it from showing two controversial videos, it's unclear how the incident will affect the rest of the outing.

The tour features multiplatinum rappers **Dr. Dre**, **Eminem**, **Snoop Dogg** and **Ice Cube**.

One of the videos depicts a robbery where Snoop Dogg contemplates killing a man. He asks concertgoers, "Should I do this ni–a?" The other, titled "Don't Marry a Ho," shows a partially nude woman and depicts oral sex, according to Greg Bowens, a spokesperson for the Detroit mayor's office.

Officials in Detroit and Auburn Hills, Mich., said the videos violated local ordinances. On Thursday, hours before the performance at Detroit's Joe Louis Arena, city officials asked the concert organizers not to air the segments.

"It was the police department determination that ... [the videos] would contribute to the delinquency of a minor," Bowens said, referring to underage ticket holders.

Police threatened to ticket members of the tour if the videos were aired. In last minute negotiations — which even included tour promoter (and former star Los Angeles Lakers guard) Magic Johnson — Up in Smoke officials agreed not to air the tapes in exchange for an extra hour of performance time, Bowens said.

The next night, the Up in Smoke tour was scheduled to stop at the Palace, an Auburn Hills venue located near Detroit. That day, acting on a tip from the Detroit authorities, the police department there made a similar request, Auburn Hills Police Chief Doreen E. Olko said.

The police informed promoters that the tapes' content would violate the city's decency ordinances and would violate the terms of the Palace's liquor license, according to Olko.

This time Up in Smoke officials refused to allow the police to view the tapes and asked a federal judge for an injunction against the city. The judge ruled that the city's attempt to block the tapes amounted to prior restraint and that the tour could air the videos.

Dr. Dre Ticketed For Tape

The show went on, but Auburn Hills police ticketed Dr. Dre for violating the city's nudity ordinance after seeing the second tape. They filed an action against the venue with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. The Palace's liquor permit doesn't allow the venue to show adult entertainment without a city permit, Olko said.

Tour publicist Marcee Rondan declined to comment about either incident. The rappers on the tour plan to release a statement this week, she said.

Dr. Dre's attorney said the rapper was considering suing Auburn Hills over the incident, according to the *Associated Press*.

One expert said venues can't do much to restrict what happens onstage at concerts.

"As a building manager, there isn't a lot that you can do," said Gary Bongiovanni, editor of *Pollstar*, a concert-industry magazine. The magazine plans to publish a story about the Michigan controversy this week, he said.

"Unless there is a clear public danger, [venue owners] don't have grounds to cancel it," he said.

But city officials have opted to ticket or arrest stars after a performance for what happens onstage, as in the Auburn Hills case last week, he added.

Representatives of other venues scheduled to host the rap tour did not return phone calls Monday.

Tour Troubles Persist

Last week's court battle was the latest in a string of high-profile troubles that have followed the Up in Smoke tour around the country.

This weekend, Eminem's wife, Kimberly Mathers, attempted suicide in the couple's Sterling Heights, Mich., home. The rapper's marriage has been strained recently as Eminem (born Marshall Bruce Mathers III) faces weapons charges in two Michigan courts. The charges stem from a June 4 incident in which he allegedly pistol-whipped a man who kissed his wife outside a suburban Detroit nightclub and accusations that he brandished a gun at a member of a rival rap group.

Mathers supported Eminem during the controversy in a letter that was published in a Detroit newspaper.

Eminem's most recent release, *The Marshall Mathers LP*, recently was certified five-times platinum and has yielded the hit "The Real Slim Shady" (RealAudio excerpt) and "Kim" (RealAudio excerpt), a song that details a violent fantasy about the rapper's wife.

On June 17, **Nate Dogg**, a singer on the tour who has been featured on several West Coast rap hits, such as "Regulate" (RealAudio excerpt), was arrested after he allegedly kidnapped, abused and made terrorist threats to his girlfriend.

A man on Snoop Dogg's tour bus was cited for possessing 300 grams of marijuana in Temecula, Calif. Authorities could not determine if the man or the bus was affiliated with the tour.